

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A vacuum switching device comprising:  
a vacuum interrupter;  
a current exchange housing adjacent to the vacuum interrupter;  
a seal provided around the vacuum interrupter and the current exchange housing so as to define a cavity within the current exchange housing and adjacent to the vacuum interrupter; and  
a tube provided within the seal, the tube disposed such that a first end of the tube accesses the cavity and a second end of the tube accesses an exterior of the seal.
2. (Original) The vacuum switching device of claim 1 wherein the tube comprises a syringe needle inserted through the seal.
3. (Original) The vacuum switching device of claim 1 wherein the tube is integrally formed into the seal during formation of the seal.
4. (Original) The vacuum switching device of claim 1 wherein the second end of the tube is open to an encapsulation material provided around the vacuum interrupter, the current exchange housing, and the seal.
5. (Original) The vacuum switching device of claim 4 wherein the encapsulation material includes a pre-filled, hot-curing, two-component epoxy resin.
- 6-7. (Canceled)

8. (Original) The vacuum switching device of claim 1 comprising an operating rod extending through the seal into the cavity, and operable to actuate the vacuum interrupter.

9-17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A vacuum switching device comprising:  
a vacuum interrupter;  
a hollow housing adjacent to the vacuum interrupter;  
a seal provided around the vacuum interrupter and the hollow housing, the seal defining an air-filled cavity within the hollow housing; and  
~~means for reducing a pressure differential between the air-filled cavity and a space exterior to the seal during a vacuum gelation process in which air pressure in the space is reduced for injection of a liquefied encapsulation material into the space, such that an integrity of the seal is maintained during the vacuum gelation process.~~

a tube provided within the seal and being sealed with cured liquefied encapsulation material to block the passage of air between an exterior of the seal and the cavity.

19-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) The vacuum switching device of claim 20 18 wherein the tube has a diameter large enough to ~~reduce the pressure differential by transferring~~ transfer air from the air-filled cavity to the space exterior to the seal ~~during the vacuum gelation process~~, and small enough to prevent transmission of the liquefied encapsulation material from the space into the air-filled cavity.

22. (New) The vacuum switching device of claim 18 wherein the tube comprises a syringe needle inserted through the seal.

23. (New) The vacuum switching device of claim 18 wherein the tube is integrally formed into the seal during formation of the seal.

24. (New) The vacuum switching device of claim 18 wherein:  
the tube is disposed such that a first end of the tube accesses the cavity and a second end of the tube access an exterior of the seal, and

the second end of the tube is open to an encapsulation material provided around the vacuum interrupter, the hollow housing, and the seal.

25. (New) The vacuum switching device of claim 24 wherein the encapsulation material includes a pre-filled, hot-curing, two-component epoxy resin.

26. (New) The vacuum switching device of claim 18 comprising an operating rod extending through the seal into the cavity, and operable to actuate the vacuum interrupter.